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The Guillotine and the Weaver

BY JOHN I. KITCH, JR.*

There are numerous reasons for teaching literature in the high school. A by no means all-inclusive list would include the following: to help the student to understand himself and others, to help the student gain an appreciation of the "good" life and his cultural heritage, to assist the student in strengthening his vocabulary and level of comprehension, and finally to encourage and possibly awaken any creative power the student might have.

Once having discussed the aims of literature instruction, the next logical step is to discuss the means of meeting these aims or ends. This quite naturally brings up the problem of selecting the literature to be taught, which in turn brings up the problem of acquiring, or more accurately, devising a plan of selection or at least a few principles of selection to serve as a guide. It is along these lines that Dr. J. N. Hook is speaking when he concludes:

The literature chosen for reading in common should be that for which the majority of the students are ready and which they will find interesting and worth-while; students should be given an opportunity to express frankly their reactions to the literature they have read, and these reactions should influence the choice of selections to be used in the future; students should learn to read and enjoy "easy" literature first and then gradually be introduced to the more difficult.¹

This outlook uncovers another source of argument—one which has caused much wailing and gnashing of teeth in recent years. The whole problem in this case revolves around the so-called "classics"

* In this article Mr. Kitch, who is a senior at the University of Illinois, makes some observations on the teaching of two familiar novels.

¹ *The Teaching of High School English* (New York: Ronald Press, 1950), p. 109.

and their less fortunate brethren, the non-classics. Here the teacher is forced to decide what is a classic and what is not, and after this decision, he must decide what percentage of classics and what percentage of non-classics he will use in his course. About the only thing that can be done in this case is to fall back on "the golden mean," keeping in mind that the brass sometimes shows through the thin outer plating.

At present there are two novels that are nominally "classics" and are favorites in sophomore or senior literature. They are *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens and *Silas Marner* by George Eliot. These novels are sometimes taught the same year, and sometimes they are studied different years, but few students get through high school without studying one or both of these books. The fact that these novels are so often required reading on the high school level is a stern test of their popularity, for any piece of literature that is required reading for high school students which is able to maintain even a semblance of popularity is truly vulgar in the classical sense and deserves recognition for this alone if nothing else. This situation is rather aptly summed up by John T. Winterich in his introduction to *Silas Marner* where he begins:

Silas Marner was first published the spring Fort Sumter surrendered. Its author died in 1880. In 1895 both book and author were visited with a curse which they have not yet succeeded in shrugging off: *Silas Marner* was made required reading in American secondary schools.²

There are several different approaches to the teaching of literature, and doubtless some teachers prefer one approach over the others. The historical method has been popular for quite a while, and the analytical approach where special attention is paid to the mechanics of setting, style, plot, and so on is still a favorite approach of many instructors. The didactic or "moral" approach is not so greatly employed as it once was, while a comparatively new attack appears in the sociopsychological approach where the emphasis lies in understanding the characters and their motives in relation to the students' own experiences. The emotive approach depends mostly on the teacher's ability to convince the class that the particular piece of literature is actually fun to read. The paraphrastic approach emphasizes meaning by interpreting and paraphrasing troublesome passages.³

² *Silas Marner* (London: Heritage Press), p. vii.

³ J. N. Hook, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-167.

In all probability, the vast majority of secondary English teachers combine these various approaches when handling a novel. It would seem that using exclusively any one of the discussed methods could easily lead to stagnant boredom, while a mixture of the approaches would be more flexible and enjoyable.⁴ The point that some novels adapt more easily to one approach than any other bears looking into also. A familiarity with the author and his principal works and ideas is invaluable and almost mandatory, for using the historical approach on, say, *Crime and Punishment* is missing the boat to a great extent.

A Tale of Two Cities is essentially a historical novel, the most historical of all Dickens's novels.⁵ This correctly suggests that the novel is best handled with the historical approach, or at least with a combination of approaches based on the historical method. The story itself was suggested by Wilkie Collins's drama, *The Frozen Deep*, and was based upon Thomas Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution*.⁶ It is one of Dickens's shortest novels, as the Christmas stories and minor publications like *American Notes* are among the few works which are shorter than *Two Cities*.

Two Cities is not considered one of Dickens's best novels today, and it has been attacked for its generally over-complicated and somewhat strained plot.⁷ The continual bouncing back and forth between Paris and London becomes troublesome at times, and some of the characters in the story are rather weakly drawn and a bit inconceivable, especially Miss Pross and the Crunchers. Even heroine Lucie Manette shows little of the personality necessary for the vortex of such a ripsnorter. However, Shuckburgh sees the Defarges as among the most terrible creations of Dickens.⁸ The same gentleman also holds that *Two Cities* has a better-constructed plot than any of Dickens's other novels. He compares the story's plot to Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, noting a similarity between the house of Atreus and the family of Evremonde.⁹ *Two Cities* is really much like a stage play and fits rather well into that medium.

The most important thing in any book is the author's message, what he is telling the reader through the story. This is just as true

⁴ J. N. Hook, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168.

⁵ Sir John Shuckburgh, intro. *A Tale of Two Cities*, (London: Oxford Press, 1949).

⁶ John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1874), preface.

⁷ Arthur Quiller-Couch, *Charles Dickens and other Victorians*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1925), p. 46.

⁸ Sir John Shuckburgh, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.

⁹ *Ibid.*

of *Two Cities* as it is of any novel. Dickens was a severe critic of the England he knew.¹⁰ Practically all of his novels were aimed at certain evils he saw in English society, and *Two Cities* is no exception. The book is telling England that the same horrible slaughter can take place in England as in France unless Britannia becomes more aware of her people's welfare.¹¹ Any attempt to study *Two Cities* without spending some time discussing the history of England and France during the period of the novel's setting and during the period of the novel's writing is ignoring the point of the book entirely!

One method of filling in the necessary historical background for *Two Cities* is to have the class all do some outside reading concerning the French Revolution and then report their findings.¹² Another method brings the background to the students as they read the novel by employing a series of discussion questions designed to acquaint the students with the history of the period.¹³ Even a simple lecture followed by some discussion of the French Revolution and England during the 1850's will help the pupils to understand the book better, and this may be all that is needed, depending on the class. The point to remember is that the class must get a picture of *Two Cities'* background from somewhere, and that somewhere is usually the English teacher.

As mentioned before, Charles Dickens was a critic of English society. His books, magazine and newspaper articles, and even his correspondence are full of attacks and denunciations of numerous social evils. It is therefore a good practice to read to the class and perhaps discuss some of Dickens's more bitter attacks as in *Bleak House* or *Oliver Twist*. This would give the class an idea of Dickens the writer, and it should prove valuable when reading *Two Cities*.

Visual aids are usually valuable in the English classroom, and *Two Cities* has been made into a good, fast-moving motion picture starring Ronald Coleman, which is available for school use. This picture is especially valuable after the book has been read by the class, for then comparisons can be made between the book and the

¹⁰ J. Cordy Jeafferson, *Novels and Novelists* (London: Hurst and Blackelt, 1858), vol. II, p. 318.

¹¹ John Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

¹² John McConnell, "Preparation for Study of Tale of Two Cities," *High Points*, XVII (Nov 1935), pp. 35-37.

¹³ John Watrous, "Tale of Two Cities—A Detailed Study of the Required Classic," *The Grade Teacher*, LIX (Oct. 1941), pp. 68-69.

picture and the differences discussed and studied.¹⁴ It is also possible to have the class itself dramatize the story, for it does adapt quite well to the stage.¹⁵ This practice is obviously limited by a school's physical plant, the time available to the teacher, and so on.

Charles Dickens enjoyed tremendous popularity during his career, and has continued to be very popular throughout the world. David Cecil comments on this phenomenon:

He is the one novelist of his school whose books have not grown all dusty on the shelves, whose popularity has suffered no sensible decline.¹⁶

No doubt one of the biggest reasons for Dickens's popularity with the modern reader is the atmosphere of intense excitement that permeates his novels. His sense of drama and pathos is superb when combined with his fantastic imagination.¹⁷ The adventure story quality of *Two Cities* makes it almost perfect for the boys in high school, while the girls should find enough romance in the Darnay-Lucie-Carton subplot to make them happy. The novel does lack the characteristic Dickens humor, however—a disadvantage.¹⁸ A few passages from his other works should counteract this failing.

Two Cities is a good starter for Dickens simply because it is about the most exciting and fastest-moving novel that Dickens ever wrote. These facts alone should make *Two Cities* enjoyable to a class of high school students if, and this is a big "if," the method of instruction doesn't kill the novel and Charles Dickens along with it. Dickens is one of the world's great novelists, and he deserves a fair if not good chance in the high school English classroom.

Turning from the stormy French Revolution to the quiet town of Raveloe, one finds a much different type of novel under consideration. Charles Dickens and George Eliot were both nominally Victorians, but here the resemblance grinds to a stop, for the author of *Two Cities* and George Eliot have little in common. One of their basic differences:

Silas Marner did not come into her (Eliot's) head like *Pickwick* as an individual, complete with face and manner and

¹⁴ Sarah Mullen, "A Tale of Two Cities," *Scholastic Magazine*, XXVII (Jan 4, 1936), pp. 8-9.

¹⁵ Della Farmer, "Staging Tale of Two Cities," *Scholastic Magazine*, XXIX (Jan 23, 1937), pp. 8-9.

¹⁶ *Early Victorian Novelists* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935), p. 37.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁸ George Saintsbury, "Dickens," *Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge: University Press, 1917), vol XIII, chap 10, p. 368.

glinting spectacles, but as a representative of a type of human character, only later to be clothed in individual characteristics. She did not think of a man and then invent what sort of thing was likely to happen to him, she thought of what happened to him and from that evolved what sort of man he was likely to have been.¹⁹

Silas Marner is a short novel. It is a novel with a well balanced plot, and it is written with a peaceful charm and grace.²⁰ Mechanically, then, Eliot's novel is much better than *Two Cities*. *Silas Marner*, however, is not the fast-moving, "blood and thunder" novel that *Two Cities* is, and this is a rather serious disadvantage as far as the high school English teacher is concerned. It means more work on the teacher's part and more work on the part of the students. George Eliot is generally something entirely foreign to a high school sophomore, for her elaborate style simply is not paralleled by the majority of present-day writers. Leslie Stephen comments on this difficulty:

A modern "realist" would, I suppose, complain that she (Eliot) has omitted, or touched too slightly for his taste, a great many repulsive and brutal elements in the rustic world. The portraits, indeed, are so vivid as to convince us of their fidelity; but she has selected the less ugly, and taken the point of view from which we mainly see what was wholesome and kindly in the little village community.²¹

The crux of this problem lies in the fact that most high school students are more used to the "realist's" approach than they are to the polite and sophisticated style of Eliot. The rather backward and uninterested high school student cannot be expected to willingly plough through passages like this:

Some women, I grant, would not appear to advantage seated on a pillion, and attired in a drab joseph and a drab beaver-bonnet, with a crown resembling a small stew-pan; for a garment suggesting a coachman's great-coat, cut out under an exiguity of cloth that would only allow of miniature capes, is not well adapted to conceal deficiencies of contour, nor is drab a colour that will throw sallow cheeks into lively contrast.²²

¹⁹ David Cecil, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

²⁰ John Winterich, intro. *Silas Marner* (London: Heritage Press), p. vii.

²¹ George Eliot (London: Macmillan, 1903), p. 110.

²² George Eliot, *Silas Marner* (London: Heritage Press), p. 119.

Nor will the well-read student be enthusiastic over Eliot's description of the death of Wildfire, an important turning point in the story, when he reads:

Dunstan, however, took one fence too many, and "staked" his horse. His own ill-favored person, which was quite unmarketable, escaped without injury, but poor Wildfire, unconscious of his price, turned on his flank and painfully breathed his last.²³

This is the same George Eliot who later describes a moving love scene in *Middlemarch* thus:

Her lips trembled, and so did his. It was never known which lips were the first to move towards the other lips; but they kissed tremblingly, and then they moved apart.²⁴

The big question at this point is whether *Silas Marner* can be taught so that the students will enjoy the story, and if it can, what are some of the methods which can be used? Certainly the "thickness" of Eliot's style is an impediment which must be overcome somehow if any learning is to take place. Unlike *Two Cities*, *Silas* is not a very exciting novel; so the pure drama and suspense of the plot can hardly be expected to carry the somewhat reluctant student through the book.

The point has already been made that *Silas* is mechanically an almost perfect book. It is Eliot's most finished work.²⁵ This fact alone is regarded as important by some teachers who add that *Silas* has a large and challenging vocabulary, that it was written by a "great mind" and teaches the eventual triumph of good over evil, that the novel contains no objectionable words, and that it can be cheaply obtained in large numbers.²⁶ Educationally sound as these arguments may be, they offer little solace to students who dislike the story and embittered ex-students who sometimes explode:

Silas Marner is one part melodrama and one part Sunday School moralizing. It is merely an unacceptable scenario for a second-rate Shirley Temple movie.²⁷

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁴ George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (New York: The Booklover Press), p. 400.

²⁵ Sir A. W. Ward, "The Social Novel," *Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge: University Press, 1917), vol. XIII, p. 436.

²⁶ "The Case for *Silas Marner*," unsigned letter, *Saturday Review of Literature*, XV (Apr 17, 1937), p. 14.

²⁷ "Schoolteacher's Novel," unsigned letter, *Saturday Review of Literature*, XV (Mar 20, 1937), p. 13.

The sociopsychological approach, or variations thereof, is usually employed in teaching *Silas*. The novel is essentially a story of a man who has been seriously wronged, and the action of the book centers around his frustrated search for happiness and security. One approach to *Silas* aims indirectly at a type of bibliotherapy by relating *Silas* to a modern miser while stressing the problems of the characters in relationship to the experience of the pupils.²⁸ A variation of the same basic plan utilizes the old stand-by educational methods such as group and panel discussions, theme writing, and reports on such individually centered subjects as "Silas's problems in relation to our own," "Compare the poor relationship of the Cass brothers to today's problem of juvenile delinquency," and so on.²⁹

According to Coila Start, Eliot's purpose in writing *Silas* was to present a picture of remote country life and to stress the importance of a pure, simple life.³⁰ This brands *Silas* a didactic novel and almost automatically places a stigma on it. The stigma comes from a person's (student's too!) natural dislike of being told what to do and what not to do. The didacticism of *Silas* is of the overt variety and just might cause some antagonism in a few cases. While this is not a serious threat, it is something to keep in mind.

Miss Start has a somewhat different approach to *Silas* by which she is able to circumnavigate the various hurdles it presents. The class reads *Silas* with certain specific aims in mind. For instance, they may first read a portion of the book looking for physical descriptions of Raveloe and its vicinity. Another section may be read for specific information about the people in the story, while the next part finds the class looking for humor, and so on. All the information collected in this manner is kept in a notebook by each student.³¹

The same suggestion on a motion picture that was given for *Two Cities* holds true for *Silas* for there is a film available on the novel. Again comparison of the book and picture would be a valuable discussion topic.

Another fresh method of teaching *Silas* that gets around the grandiose rhetoric of Eliot fairly well consists of a map drawn on the blackboard. The map represents the class's conception of the

²⁸ Edith Lackey, "Silas Marner," *Clearing House*, XXIV (Feb 1950), p. 346.

²⁹ "Connecting Present Life and *Silas Marner*," *English Journal*, XXXV (Sept 1946), p. 399.

³⁰ "A Different Slant," *English Journal*, XXXI (Jan 1942), p. 11.

³¹ *Ibid.*

novel's setting, and each pupil places every new thing he discovers on the map each day. In this way, all the class has a chance to participate actively in the class discussion.³²

Some attempts have been made to approach *Silas* from a "naturalistic" point of view, stressing the idea that Eliot depicts a group of people who are mere "tools of destiny," that she shows how little human beings are in this complex world. The question that immediately arises in this case is one of interpretation—isn't this reading more into *Silas* than is actually there? Did Eliot mean to picture Silas as forced into evil and degrading positions by the world, or did she mean to show a man who regains his self-respect by living the "good" life? It appears that by Silas's eventual triumph, Eliot is turning her back on the pessimistic outlook featured by such writers as Thomas Hardy.

Henry Christ, however, tells of his class reading *Silas* in this "naturalistic" view and enjoying it very much. His class selected four critical points in the plot—the robbery in Lantern Yard, the death of Wildfire, Mollie's death, and the discovery of the body of Dunsey; and worked from there.³³

George Eliot's world was somewhat limited, just as was Jane Austen's. The author of *Silas Marner* presents the same difficulties to modern readers as do the majority of Victorian writers. The sometimes rather artificial and "over-polite" style, the highly involved grammar and diction, and the frustrating and needless parenthetical observations on certain characters and their actions—all these pitfalls to the modern adult reader are much more crucial to the adolescent high school student. These difficulties must be solved if any learning and appreciation are to take place.

³² "More Fun with *Silas Marner*," *English Journal*, XXXXI (Jan 1952), p. 41.

³³ "Cause, Effect and *Silas Marner*" *High Points*, XXIII (Sept 1941), p. 71.

A High School Reading List for Students Going to College*

JOSEPH W. FORAKER, *Charles Curtis Intermediate School, Wichita, Kansas*
OSCAR M. HAUGH, *School of Education, University of Kansas*

"What books should high school students read before they go to college?" Since parents and teachers have asked this question so many times, the writers decided to investigate the problem involved to see if such a list of books might be secured for Kansas youth; and, if so, what the characteristics of such a list of books would be.

Lists of "best books" have been prepared many times. Furthermore, most lists agree in some choices and differ widely in others. The differences are the result of such factors as variation among personnel choosing the books and differing assumptions basic to each list.

The writers believed that, in making such a list, they should start with the assumption that the problem is really one of articulation; that is, reading certain books in high school should prepare the student to perform more effectively in his class in college freshman English, particularly in those portions of the course devoted to the reading of literature. If this assumption is accepted, then the people who teach the freshman English courses in college might well be the ones to recommend books that high school students should read before they go to college.

Accordingly, a letter was addressed to all the members of the English departments at Baker University and the University of Kansas who teach one or more sections of freshman English. The request was stated as follows:

"Teachers of high school students write to K.U. several times a year requesting a list of books that high school students should read. Would you, as a teacher of college English, be willing to recommend about ten (or more) books that you feel a student should read before he enters college? You may recommend books of all types: novels, dramas, biographies, poetry."

A total of 53 college teachers were polled in the two universities. Of this group, 27 responded with 273 individual recommendations. Nine selections were deleted from the list because they were not specific enough. Examples of such recommendations were "a good history of the United States" and "a survey of the arts text." Of the 264 remaining specific recommendations, there were 102 different titles. This indicates a disagreement on 162 titles, which equals 61 per cent of the total number possible. Accordingly, one might then say that the extent of overlapping agreement was 39 per cent, which is quite high for lists of this type.

Before presenting the list of 102 titles, it would be well to note the following characteristics of the list:

1. No single book or selection was a unanimous choice. The most frequent choice, *Huckleberry Finn*, was chosen by 12 of the 27 teachers, or slightly over 44 per cent.

* If you were to list ten books as "must-reading" for every student who plans to go to college, what ten would you select? This article, reprinted by permission from the University of Kansas *Bulletin of Education*, is a compilation of answers from Kansas.

2. Thirty-nine titles were recommended by only one teacher and 28 were recommended by only two teachers. Thus 67 selections, roughly two-thirds of the total, were recommended by no more than two persons.

3. Over two-thirds of the titles recommended, 69 to be exact, were published before 1900. Only 33 were published during the twentieth century.

4. English and American authors dominated the choices. Forty-five of the authors were English, 44 were American, and only 13 were chosen from the literature of other nations.

5. The selections were fairly well diversified as to type: 49 were novels; 16, dramas; 14, poems; 7, biographies; 8, short stories; and 7, collections of nonfiction prose. This diversity may have been encouraged by the statement in the letter, "You may recommend books of all types: novels, dramas, biographies, poetry." While novels predominate, it is interesting to note that 44 of the 102 choices are nonfiction.

6. The list, apparently, became a "quality" list. Seventy-two titles are included on the reading lists of the National Council of Teachers of English, *Adventuring with Books* and *Books for You*. Sixty-five of the titles may be found on one of the three lists published by the American Library Association: *A Basic Book Collection for High Schools*, *A Basic Book Collection for Junior High Schools*, and *A Basic Book Collection for Elementary Grades*. Some books were on one list and not on the other. In all, only 24 selections were not listed on the elementary and secondary reading lists of the National Council of Teachers of English or the American Library Association.

7. The list contains a generous supply of classics. Ten different plays from Shakespeare were included. Shakespeare's plays were recommended a total of 37 times which is approximately 14 per cent of the total number of possible recommendations.

8. The reading level of this list could properly be rated as "difficult" for average high school students. There are few selections on the list which might be classified as "easy" reading at high school levels. Of the 72 selections which are included in publications of the National Council of Teachers of English, only five are rated as being below the difficulty level of high school reading.

9. The classics of modern children's literature are relatively conspicuous by their absence. Only one Newbery winner was included on the list, *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes, and this book received only one vote.

In the list that follows, the 102 selections are listed in order of frequency of mention. In the first paragraph, the number appearing in parentheses indicates the number of times that a book was recommended by different teachers.

Huckleberry Finn, Clemens (12); *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare (10); *Macbeth*, Shakespeare (8); *The Bible*, (8); Poems, Robert Frost (8); *Autobiography*, Benjamin Franklin (7); *Treasure Island*, Stevenson (7); *Silas Marner*, Eliot (6); *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe (6); *Old Man and the Sea*, Hemingway (6); *Odyssey*, Homer (5); *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift (5); *Ivanhoe*, Scott (5).

Selections mentioned four times included: *My Antonia*, Cather; *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer; Poems, Emily Dickinson; *House of Seven Gables*, Hawthorne; *Babbitt*, Lewis; *Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck; *Alice in Wonder-*

land, Carroll; *Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper; *David Copperfield*, Dickens; *Abraham Lincoln, the Prairie Years*, Sandburg.

Selections mentioned three times included: *John Brown's Body*, Benet; *Selections*, Winston Churchill; *Pickwick Papers*, Dickens; *Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens; *Short Stories*, Bret Harte; *Short Stories*, Poe; *As you Like It*, Shakespeare; *Hamlet*, Shakespeare; *Much Ado about Nothing*, Shakespeare; *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare; *Our Town*, Wilder; *Tom Sawyer*, Clemens.

Selections mentioned twice included: *Essays of Elia*, Lamb; *Fairy Tales*, Hans Christian Andersen; *Winesburg, Ohio*, Sherwood Anderson; *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte; *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan; *Last Days of Pompeii*, Bulwer-Lytton; *Wind in the Willows*, Grahame; *Red Badge of Courage*, Crane; *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser; *Tom Jones*, Fielding; *Fairy Tales*, Grimm Brothers; *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne; *Brave New World*, Huxley; *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Malory; *Moby Dick*, Melville; *Desire under the Elms*, O'Neill; *Common Sense*, Paine; *Poems*, Carl Sandburg; *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare; *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare; *Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare; *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray; *Ben Hur*, Wallace; *An Outline of History*, Wells; *Poems*, Walt Whitman; *Streetcar Named Desire*, Williams; *Kidnapped*, Stevenson; *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe.

Books mentioned only once included: *Forty Years at Hull House*, Addams; *Lorna Doone*, Blackmore; *Mythology*, Bulfinch; *Through the Looking Glass*, Carroll; *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Cather; *Giants in the Earth*, Rolvaag; *Don Quixote*, Cervantes; *The Cherry Orchard*, Chekov; "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Coleridge; *Old Curiosity Shop*, Dickens; *The Idiot*, Dostoevsky; *Intruder in the Dust*, Faulkner; *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert; *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky; *The Little Foxes*, Hellman; *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway; *Kon Tiki*, Heyerdahl; *Toilers of the Sea*, Hugo; *Sketch Book*, Irving; *The Dubliners*, Joyce; *The Jungle Book*, Kipling; *Darkness at Noon*, Koestler; *Benito Cereno*, Melville; *Areopagitica*, Milton; *Paradise Lost*, Milton; "Rape of the Lock," Pope; *The Cloister and the Hearth*, Reade; *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare; "Ode to the West Wind," Shelley; *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles; *Nature of Poetry*, Stauffer; *Walden*, Thoreau; *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy; *Modern British and American Poetry*, Untermeyer; *Poems*, Wordsworth; *Idylls of the King*, Tennyson; *Johnny Tremain*, Forbes; *Up from Slavery*, Washington; *Story of My Life*, Keller.

Now that we have a list of books recommended by college teachers of freshman English, how will the high school English teacher be able to use it? The following comments seem to be worth considering:

1. The list is obviously intended for the college-bound student. It should not become a "must read" list for all high school students.

2. Even the college-bound student should not be expected to read every selection on this list. It is doubtful if many of the English teachers who read this article will have read every one of the 102 selections named.

Reading the selections mentioned on this list may be helpful to students enrolling in freshman English in the two schools whose instructors contributed to the listing. However, since all teachers of Freshman English in the two schools did not cooperate, it is likely that there are books not on the list which may be even more important to read. Under the circumstances, however, there is no way of telling what those books might be.

4. It may be important to note that teachers might find it wise to use a list of selections such as this with care in some communities. No attempt was made to "purge" any books from the list. However, the content of some of the titles may be such that it would be politic to strike them from the list.

5. The list emphasizes selections that the students *should* read. This does not mean that all books *could* be read by the average high school student. The difficulty level of each book must be kept in mind when teachers are making specific recommendations to individual students.

For High School Newspaper Advisers

A three-day short course for advisers of high school newspapers will be held at Allerton Park, near the University of Illinois, on July 25, 26, and 27, 1955. Professor Don Brown, who is in charge of the short course, promises that it will be practical and inexpensive. For details, write to Professor Donald Brown, School of Journalism, Gregory Hall, University of Illinois.

The Stratford Theatre

The summer theatre at Stratford, Connecticut, is being expanded from a summer theatre to year-round cultural center. New buildings, new roads, and new equipment are being purchased. The Shakespeare Academy will offer students the opportunity to learn much about acting.

The theatre is soliciting \$500,000 in addition to the amount already raised. If you may be interested in making a contribution or in attending any of the plays to be offered this summer, write for details to American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy, 1850 Elm Street, Stratford, Connecticut.

CHANGES IN NCTE EDITORSHIPS

End of an Era

In July, Mr. Hatfield will relinquish the editorship of the *English Journal* and *College English*. For exactly a third of a century he has selected and edited for the *Journal* the best obtainable articles to help the high school teacher of English. The table of contents of the January, 1922, issue, the first under his editorship, reflects the practicability and the inspirational quality of every one of the approximately 325 issues (about 22,700 pages). Here, to satisfy your historical curiosity, is that table of contents:

Preparation for Teaching Literature . .	Lincoln R. Gibbs
The Business of Running a School Paper .	William Lewin
Oral English and Rhetoric	Marion J. Austin
The Bones of Dreams	Robert Withington
Shall We Teach Gender?	A. L. Phillips
Notes on the Short Story	R. W. Pence
Eleventh Annual Meeting of the NCTE	
News and Notes	
Book Notices	

For five years previously, young Mr. Hatfield (he is *still* young Mr. Hatfield in his seventies) had served his apprenticeship, under the editorship of James F. Hosis, who had originated the magazine in 1912. In 1922 Mr. Hatfield purchased it, and in the years since then he has become almost synonymous with the NCTE, which has always designated the *Journal* as one of its official organs.

In 1928 Mr. Hatfield began editing the College Edition of the *English Journal*. This magazine contained most of the same articles as the High School Edition, but substituted, for some of them, material of greater interest to college teachers. By 1938 there was evidence that a separate magazine, not just a separate edition, was needed. So was born *College English*, owned and edited by Mr. Hatfield for 17 years.

In 1954 the Council arranged to purchase the magazines, with Mr. Hatfield to continue as their editor. Now Mr. Hatfield has indicated his desire to retire.

The English teachers of America owe more to Mr. Hatfield's wise editorship and leadership than they can recognize. Even the relatively few of them who do not know his name have been affected directly by his work. More important, millions of America's chil-

dren (many of them now with children or grandchildren of their own) have been unknowingly influenced by the alert and ever-sympathetic W. Wilbur Hatfield.

Beginning of an Era

The Executive Committee has been fortunate in securing for the editorial positions two men, each in his thirties, to continue the work that Mr. Hatfield is relinquishing.

As editor of the *English Journal*, Professor Dwight Burton of Florida State University is ideally prepared. At the University of Minnesota, where he received his doctorate, he chose a good balance between courses in English and Education, and served for 3 years as the head of the Department of English at University High School. In Florida he has become known very quickly and very favorably to teachers in elementary schools, high schools and colleges. He has served and is still serving as chairman of the Council's Committee on Senior High School Book List, the group responsible for *Books for You*. He is in considerable demand as a speaker; those who attended the High School Section meeting in Detroit were enthusiastic about all three speeches, the third one of which he delivered. Readers of the *Journal* will recall the several articles that Mr. Burton has written for the magazine that he will now edit.

Professor Frederick Gwynn will be the new editor of *College English*. Professor Gwynn is at present in the Department of English at Pennsylvania State University, but has recently accepted a position at the University of Virginia. As associate chairman of the Council's Committee on Approaches to Literature, he has revealed both organizational ability and a keen desire to find the best ways of transmitting part of our cultural heritage to college students. After Mr. Gwynn spoke at the NCTE dinner held in conjunction with MLA in 1953, the praise of what he had to say and his manner of saying it was unstinted. Professor Gwynn's latest publication is *The Case for Poetry*, of which he is co-author.

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